Vol. 4

{ See Note at end. }

UNITY

CHURCH-DOOR PULPIT,

FOR

FREEDOM, FELLOWSHIP AND CHARACTER IN RELIGION.

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# THE POETRY OF RATIONAL RELIGION.

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Hardly any charge is brought against rational religion more frequently than that it has not the warmth and color of the older faiths. It is not picturesque like these, men say; it is not poetical. The final specification here is that to which I desire to call your attention this morning. It is quite possible that some of you may think I might have chosen a more practical subject for your consideration. The charge that rational religion is not poetical is a charge to which some of you, I doubt not, are quite indifferent. For some of you do not, or imagine that you do not, care for poetry. You have confessed as much to me. If you had been perfectly frank you would have said you wished I cared for it a little or a good deal less. But even those of you who are of this way of thinking and feeling only imagine that you do not care for poetry. "Everybody likes poetry," says Mr. Emerson. "They do not like Moore; they do not like Tupper; they do not Shelley; but they like Shakspere, they like Homer, they like Burns." But even here I doubt if we have any final test. I believe that there are people who do not care for Homer or Shakspere or Burns, who nevertheless do care for poetry, care for it very much; and when it is absent miss it painfully, though it may be unconsciously. These people may imagine that rational religion would be just as much to them as it is now if it had no poetry in it, but if it had none it would not be just as much to them by a great deal. They might not know what they were missing, but they would miss something, and miss it very much. For poetry in its most secret essence is proportion, is harmony, is beauty, is grace, and a religion lacking in these things could not be satisfying to any healthy, well-developed man or woman.

But for myself, if I were obliged to feel that our rational religion is not poetical, that it does not naturally and easily lend itself to poetical expression, I should be seriously troubled. I should be hardly less troubled, if any, than I should be if I were obliged to feel that rational religion is not scientific, that it does not lend itself naturally and easily to scientific expression. I should suspect that there was something radically defective in it. For poetry is to me a test of truth; swifter than science and hardly more fallible. A doctrine of religion which did not tend to, which did not

seek, which did not demand poetical expression and interpretation would stand condemned already.

Is the doctrine of rational religion such a doctrine? I have already implied my conviction that it is not. But you will expect me to give some reason for the faith that is in me. This I will gladly do, but, in the first place, I wish to make a frank confession that rational religion has not yet attained to any *such* poetical expression as that which has embodied the religious ideas of the past. Rational religion has no Iliad; no Odyssey; no *Divina Commedia;* no "Paradise Lost." But is it not too much to expect that it should have? The religion of Greece was hundreds of years old, so old that it was already struck with death when the Homeric poems were written. The dogma of Mediæval Christianity had been developing for a dozen centuries before it found its supreme poetical embodiment in the great epic of Dante. In Milton's day Protestantism was only about one hundred years old, but the dogma of Paradise Lost was not a Protestant creation. Calvin was but another Augustine in his theology. When rational religion has developed itself through as many centuries as the mythology of Homer, the Catholicism of Dante, the Calvinism of Milton, its epic-poet may arise. It is impossible for us to forecast his poem. Were it not we could write it ourselves. But if it shall express the doctrine of rational religion as grandly as Homer expressed the religion of Greece, and Dante that of Mediæval Europe, blessed will be the eyes that read its golden lines!

In the meantime there is a sense, and that a very deep and earnest one, in which all the religious poetry of the past is the poetry of rational religion. For nothing is more characteristic of the philosophy of rational religion in its highest forms than the insistence that we can have no quarrel with the past, that its beliefs and social methods were inevitable stages in the line of growth. "It must needs be that stumbling-blocks come," said Jesus. But the stumbling-blocks of the later generations are not infrequently the stepping-stones of the earlier. Rational religion has no quarrel with the mythologies and theologies of the past, any more than a grown man has any quarrel with the ideas of his babyhood. They did very well for a beginning. The method of Eighteenth Century rationalism was to attack as guilty and criminal all the religious manifestations of the past. They were the work of miserable self-seeking priests and theologians. In truth, they were the work of men who in their day and generation were just as earnest, just as unselfish, just as truth-loving as the most enlightened thinkers and the most advanced reformers of today.

> "The child is father of the man,
> And I would wish my days to be
> Bound each to each in filial piety."

This is as true and good spoken of universal history and progress as of the individual life. Rational Religion allows no break in the order of development. Once upon a time my little daughter said to me: "Is this sky here in the country the same sky that we have in Brooklyn? Does it all *join on?*" It does indeed, and the religious ideas of the present all *join on* to those of the past; they all come out of them by processes of natural evolution. There have not been two sources of religious ideas in the past and in the present.

> "Out from the heart of nature rolled
> The burdens of the Bible old."

Out from the great heart of man have come all the religions, all the mythologies, all the theologies, all the ecclesiastical systems. A pseudo-rationalism virtually allows the supernatural claim of the old faiths when it sets them apart as something *different in kind* from the new faith. Supernaturalism is as natural to a certain stage of human progress as rationalism to another further on. And so it is that, as I said, in a very deep and earnest sense, all the religious poetry of the past is the poetry of rational religion. For the roots of rational religion go down into the oldest past. It is the heir of all the ages. And therefore in its great anthology it includes the old Vedic hymns and Indian epics, the old Testament Prophecies and Psalms, the "Works and Days" of Hesiod, the Iliad and Odyssey, the old Norse Sagas, and the *Nibelungen-Lied*, Sophocles and

Æschylus, Virgil and Lucretius, and coming down to Christian times, Dante and Milton; and besides all these a multitude that no man can number whom a religious inspiration has controlled and driven to poetical expression. Here is no "catch," as children say. Here is an inevitable corollary of the doctrine of the evolution of religion.

Even if the poetry of rational religion were confined to that of poets consciously rationalistic in their ideas and their aims, it would not be meagre in quantity, nor poor in quality. But it is not so confined. It is not for the reason already given, and it is not for another and very different reason; namely, that there has been no defense against occasional outbreaks of "sweet reasonableness" at any time in human history. Rationalism, as a consistent system of ideas and beliefs and purposes, is an affair of modern growth, but there have been gleams of rational belief and feeling all the ages down. And there have been in ancient times whole periods characterized by a more rational outlook than certain periods of modern times. Matthew Arnold has an admirable comparison between Thucydides and Sir Walter Raleigh, in the course of which he contends that Thucydides was the more modern of the two, *i. e.*, that he displayed much more than Raleigh those traits of caution and reserve and rationality which are preeminently characteristic of modern thought. One of them wrote a History of the World and the other a History of the Sicilian Expedition. The latter was the modern thing to do, and yet the ancient did it. There is, if I may say so, a rationalist in the true poet, the true man, of every age. As men's actions have frequently afforded the severest commentaries on their conventional beliefs, so have their spontaneous expressions in prose and verse. And so it happens that even the oldest literature abounds in ideas and sentiments which the modern rationalist can take upon his lips without a moment's doubt or hesitation. He finds them in the Vedas and Avesta; he finds them in the Old Testament and New; he find them in Homer. Sophocles is as full of them as the June sods are full of buttercups. They abound in Dante and Milton. But there is one name that stands out in poetry above all others. And the rationalist in Shakspere is all pervading. There has been much discussion in regard to his religion. Formally, it was no doubt that of his time. Essentially it was something very different. "Sweet reasonableness" is everywhere the characteristic of his profoundest moods. His plays are full of sentences with which our modern scientific, rationalistic thought can clinch its arguments, can illustrate and adorn itself. If rational religion had no other poetry at its command but that contained in Shakspere's ample verse it would have no mean array.

But it has other. Nothing was more characteristic of supernatural religion in its consistent exposition than its contempt for nature and for human life here in this present world. If here and there its poets and its preachers deigned to praise the outward form of things it was only by way of preliminary to an *a fortiori* argument for the superior beauty and delight of some "calm land beyond the sea."

> "How beautiful must heaven be
> When life's last sunbeam dies!"

Every confession of the beauty of the outward universe led up at last to this. So with regard to every natural affection of the human heart. I do not mean to say that poets and preachers dominated by the old religion have not added to our store many a gracious utterance concerning the great loves and passions of the human heart. I only mean to say that they have not done this consistently. All they have done of this sort goes to the credit of the latent rationalist, not to the credit of the supernaturalist thinker or poet as such. When these are consistent, the love of man or woman or of little child is treated as a temptation against which we must be on our guard. The idea seems to be that we have only so much love, and that any given to human objects of affection is so much taken from God. Protestant Evangelicism has never shaken itself clear of the old monkish and ascetic dread of natural affections. An odor of the charnel-house

pervades the poetry of love and marriage, as written by the consistently Evangelical poet. The function of the Puritan parson was to carry round the warning death's head at the baptismal or the wedding feast. Here is the opening stanza of a veritable Epithalamium, written by a New England shepherd for a lambkin of his mountain fold:

> "Eliza's bridal day draws nigh;
> And yet that day may never come,
> For, like her sister, she may die,
> And sink to an untimely tomb."

But as nothing has been more characteristic of the receding faith than its contempt for outward nature and for the natural affections of the human heart, so is there nothing more characteristic of the rising faith of rational religion than its delight in natural beauty, its satisfaction in the outward universe, and its adoption and consecration of all natural affections. To the anthology of rational religion, then, belongs every true poem that has ever been inspired by any beauty of the outward universe. The poets of the mountains and the sea, the poets of the flowers and the birds are each and all our poets. Ours is the music of Shelley's Sky-lark; of Wordsworth's, too, and of the Ettrick Shepherd's

> "Bird of the wilderness, blithesome and cumberless."

Wordsworth's daffodils dance, every one of them, in tune with our idea; and ours is Burns's "Wee, modest crimson-tippéd flower," and his "Wee, sleekit, cowerin', timorous beastie," and no more his "Cotter's Saturday Night" than his "Mary in Heaven," and every stainless song he wrote of love and tenderness. For rational religion does not believe in outward nature more than in human nature. And because there is more human nature in Burns than in Wordsworth there is more rational religion in him. Rational religion believes in human nature; does not think it a mistake; the love of parent and child, of youth and maid, of man and wife—it adopts all these; it delights in them; it glories in them. It asks for them no ulterior justification. In and of themselves they are an unspeakable good. And so the poetry of rational religion is inclusive of all poetry of natural affection. The idyl of Ruth is here, the passion of Juliet, the sorrow of Evangeline, the lyric joy of Herrick and Waller and Carew and Burns and Tennyson, Keats's *St. Agnes' Eve*, the divinely beautiful and noble marriage odes of Spenser, ay, and a thousand other songs and poems, dear to the heart of man because they sing the power and beauty and delight of life's most solemn and mysterious joy.

Here I might rest my case. If rational religion had no other poetry to call its own than that which is its own in virtue of that claim which the principle of evolution secures to us of the present time on all the past, it would still have a great abundance. But this would not be peculiarly its own. Nor any more is that which it can claim in virtue of its satisfaction and delight in outward nature and in the natural affections of the human heart. If there were no acknowledged entity among us corresponding to the term rational religion the poetry of outward nature and of human love and tenderness would still sing on though under orthodox ban. But there is such an entity, and although it is still young it has already inspired a body of poetry which is peculiarly its own, which has not been adopted by it, but has been written consciously under its influence and for the expression of its ideas and its aims. In proof of this I need not go an inch beyond my personal experience, which is also yours.

Through all the years that I have preached to you, you will bear me witness that I have never had any difficulty in finding poetical confirmation for my thoughts. No matter what aspect of rational religion I have been trying to present, there has always been an embarrassment of poetic riches at my service. I have always been able to cap my climax with some stanza of Emerson or Goethe or Browning or Lowell, or it might be of some less famous poet, who nevertheless has been equal to the occasion. It is a notable fact that the influence of every one of our own major poets has been cast upon the rational side, and with our minor poets it has been much the same. That rational religion has developed a strain of poetry peculiarly its own—our

own little *Book of Hymns and Tunes* is an abiding witness, never at any other time rising to such a pitch of lyric sweetness as when the inspiration is most directly and consciously that of rational ideas. Rational religion, not poetical! I could read to you the poetry of its psalmists and its prophets till we were overtaken by the evening shadows, and even then the half would not be told.

It was an ancient saying, "Let me write the songs of a people and I do not care who writes its laws." It might with equal truth be said, "Let me write the songs of a people and I do not care who writes its theology." Today the poetry of the American people, the poetry which they admire and love, is implicitly and explicitly opposed to the doctrines of the popular religion. Implicitly because it has no word of commendation or of sympathy for these doctrines. It does not attack them, but it does not mention them. Their case is that of Martin Farquhar Tupper. When some one asked Thackeray what they thought of him in England, his answer was, "We never think of him." But the poetry which is admired and loved among us is explicit also in its rationalistic tendency. It sings the rationalistic doctrine of the immanence of God, the dignity of man, the sanity of natural affections, the glory of this present life, the infinite superiority of character to creed. Seek for the highest point reached by the inspiration of any modern poet, even though he be in outward affiliation with the prevailing creed, and, ten to one, you will find this point coincident with his point of most conspicuous agreement with the creed of rational religion. Wordsworth wrote a host of ecclesiastical sonnets in glorification of the Established Church of England. Is it not safe to say that not all of them together contain so much of the essence of true poetry as some half dozen lives in "Tintern Abbey," which express, better, I had almost said, than any other passage in literature, the rational idea of God:

> "A sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky and in the mind of man:
> A motion and a spirit which impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> All rolls through all things."

There is another way of approaching the subject which we are considering. So far I have been dealing with poetry as an outward form, and I think that I have shown sufficiently that dealing with it in this way no antagonism between poetry and rational religion can be predicated with any show of truth. In virtue of its own doctrine of evolution it has a right to call its own all the great poetry of the past. Homer and Dante and Milton are members of its countless choir. In virtue of its delight in outward nature and its sympathy with every natural human passion and affection it has an adoptive claim on all the poetry which has been inspired by outward nature or the joy of human love. And besides all this it has a body of verse, which is being steadily augmented, which has been written directly and consciously under the influence of rational ideas. But when the charge is made that there is no poetry in rational religion it may be that the meaning is not that it has no outward form of poetry at its command, but that its ideas are not essentially poetic. For myself I do not know of any better test of this than the ease and naturalness with which they lend themselves to poetical expression, unless it be that the point of highest poetical inspiration generally coincides with the point of rational affirmation. Take my friend Putnam's book, "Songs and Singers of the Liberal Faith," and tell me if the songs do not grow more poetical as they grow more liberal, and if the poetry does not reach its highest point of inspiration in the most thoroughly rationalistic poems of Gannett and Johnson and Longfellow and Weiss? But let us take up one after another some of the ideas of religion and consider them as entertained by anti-rationalists and rationalists and determine if we can on which side is the advantage so far as their essential poetry is concerned.

The essence of poetry is beauty. Beauty is difficult to define, but it is easily apprehended. Take the idea of God; which is more beautiful, the idea of the popular theology or the idea of rational religion? The idea of the popular theology is that God is a great non-natural man, the mechanical creator

of the universe. It is further, that before the existence of the first human being, He devised a scheme, which He was well aware would plunge the great majority of mankind into eternal misery. Nevertheless He did not refrain from the creation of beings preordained to endless suffering. He did eventually, however, allow the sufferings of an innocent being on the cross to cancel the sufferings of an insignificant fraction of the race; this innocent being was, in the most authoritative language of the popular theology, his "only-begotten Son." To this idea of God the doctrine of rational religion opposes the idea of a Being who is the inmost life of an illimitable universe; who is no mechanical creator but a principle of activity gradually unfolding itself into ever higher forms of life; hence, in due time, came man upon the earth, and, once arrived, straightway began in him a new progression. Now, between this idea and that of the popular theology there is not so much, it seems to me, difference in beauty as contrast of beauty and deformity. It was the curse of Milton's epic that it was hopelessly entangled with a conception of God and his relation to the world, that was barren of all poetry. The best that Milton's marvelous genius could accomplish was to conceal, in part, with splendid imagery, the scheme which he accepted as the basis of his poem. But still the scheme is there, and the attempt of Milton to invest it with poetic beauty is one of the most tragic circumstances which the history of literature affords.

The idea of man presented by the popular religion is of a piece with its idea of God. It is the idea of a being hopelessly depraved, without any natural power of knowing what is true or doing what is right. Is this is a poetical idea? Is it a beautiful idea? But the idea of man cherished by rational religion is the idea of Shakespere when he said: 'What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculties! In form and moving how express and admirable! In action how like an angel! In apprehension how like a God." That is poetical; not the form merely, but the most secret essence. But how about the lineage of this glorious creature? to be descended from an ape-like ancestry—is that poetical? Well, rational religion waits upon science. If science finally resolves that man is so descended, rational religion will not demur. Her concern is with man as he is now, not as he was half a million years ago. But how is an ape-like ancestry more unpoetical than a sudden manufacture out of the dust of the earth. An ape is not an interesting being. If I could have my choice I would rather be descended from a horse. But an ape is higher in the scale of being than an inanimate clod. But I repeat, the concern of rational religion is with man as he is now. And now he is not an ape though sometimes he is sufficiently apish. He is what Shakspere said; and being that, the idea of him as such is infinitely more poetical than the idea of a being whose whole nature is evil and evil utterly.

Emerson said, "The soul knows no persons." So the personality of Jesus is not and cannot be a fundamental fact in religion, however glorious as an illustration of the abiding laws of the religious life. But in every Christian community the personality of Jesus is commanding and engrossing, and it is with reference to him especially that the popular religion claims to poetical to the entire exclusion of the rational religionist. Nor is it to be denied that when adroitly managed the life and death of Jesus as conceived by the evangelical Christian furnish a great fund of exceedingly poetic, exceedingly dramatic situations. But they always do this in virtue of a certain dishonesty, if I may use so harsh a word, which consciously or unconsciously conceals the essential character of the great scheme of Redemption as set down in the authoritative creeds and articles of evangelical churches. This as there set down is not beautiful; is not poetical. It is grim and ghastly. The life and death of Jesus as conceived by rational religion is a true poem, idyllic, epical and tragical as any poem could well be. There have been a hundred evangelical lives of Jesus written. There is not in any one of them, I might say in all of them together, so much poetry as in the first dozen chapters of Renan. If the remainder of the book had made good the promise of these chapters what a life of

Jesus we should have had! "There is a statue in every block of marble." What a poem there is in the New Testament account of Jesus for him who, through the investiture of myth and legend and exaggeration, has eyes to see the form and lineaments of the actual man! And this poem will yet be written. Only to make it what it ought to be it needs some Michael Angelo of verse to liberate it from its marble bonds and bid it live forever in men's hearts.

The idea of the Bible, like the idea of Jesus, is not essential to religion, but in every Christian community, like the idea of Jesus, it is commanding and engrossing. The idea of our popular Christianity concerning it is, that it is a theography, written as by the hand of God; therefore infallible in every part. If the character of its contents harmonized with such a theory it might be regarded as poetical; but it does not, and the first essential of the highest poetry is truth. But the idea of the Bible entertained by rational religion is full of poetry. It is full of human interest, of human passion, human tenderness. Is it not a thousand times more beautiful to think that these various books were forged in furnaces of individual conscience and imagination than to think their writers were so many puppets writing they knew not what?

But after all, a man's life is, or ought to be, the real poem, the real "mystic unfathomable song." It is certainly important that we should, if possible, cherish large and beautiful and poetical conceptions of God and man and human destiny. But it is of the first importance that we should make our lives picture and poetry, music and song; that these should be a sweet and solemn harmony. I know that in the natural order the conceptions help the life, but in the course of my experience it has been my lot to meet with men and women who, cherishing what seemed to me to be a narrow and unlovely creed, barren of all poetry, nevertheless have at the same time been living a rarely beautiful and noble life, a life which was itself a poem and a song. And, on the other hand, I have sometimes met with men and women who, in possession of a creed that seemed to me wonderfully beautiful, as well as true, have somehow failed to find in it the inspiration of a generous and beautiful behavior. Their ideas have been beautiful and their conduct has been mean. Now, if we cannot have noble and beautiful ideas and, at the same time, live a noble and beautiful life, there cannot be a moment's question which had better go. Of course it must be the ideas. Better a good life with Calvin's creed than a bad life with Emerson's. But no man ever lived a mean and despicable life *because* of large and beautiful ideas. The trouble is that such ideas are permitted to remain infertile in the mind and heart. Let it not be so among you.

> "Go put your creed into your deed,
> Nor speak with double tongue."

Make your conceptions of God and man and life and destiny as large and sweet, as beautiful, as poetical as you can, and then see to it that they are a law unto your daily life; that this be not in any wise put to shame by their majestic loveliness but animated and inspired by them, so that your life of mind and will may be no conflicting dualism, but a complete and joyous unity.

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Our "Church-Door Pulpit" hints its purpose in its name. It aims to furnish fortnightly a transfigured tract,—transfigured by being paid for, and by representing not so much a given system of beliefs as the emphasis, in somewhat varying beliefs, on "Freedom, Fellowship and Character in Religion;" this tract to be taken from the rack or table at the church-door to the home, there to serve its little mission by reading in the family, lending to a neighbor, mailing to a distant friend, etc. We hope the plan may be destined to wide adoption by Liberal churches as part of their regular church-work.

The word "UNITY" in the title bears to the Committee who arrange the series a wide meaning, pointing more to the substance, than to the forms, of religious thought and faith; and in inviting contributions they have sought, not only through the whole range, but in both directions beyond the range, of those who bear the "Unitarian" name,—though most of the writers must naturally be found within that name. "New Orthodoxy," "New Judaism," those who care for no name but "Religion," and the "Ethical Societies," will all be represented. The choice of subject is left to the writers; and *each writer is responsible f r his own utterance alone, and for nothing else in the series.* "One of your best—a life-helping sermon, or a thought-sermon reaching the life," was the invitation sent out.

# THE "CHURCH-DOOR PULPIT"

## *NEW FURNISHED FOR NEXT YEAR.*

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The second year of the "CHURCH DOOR PULPIT" begins in April, and the preachers that are to preach the fortnightly sermon in it are gathering. The series of twenty sermons will differ from last year's in two respects. Four numbers will be devoted respectively to

**Channing, Parker, Emerson, Martineau,**

giving a score or two of what in each writer may be called his "*Gospel passages.*" If one would learn in short space for what the four great prophets of our Liberal Faith stand, let him read these numbers; and keep them on hand to give a friend. If these four pamphlets do not furnish "Scripture readings" for the *pulpit* also, it will be a surprise.

In three more numbers the subjects

**"God," "Miracles," "The Bible,"**

will be respectively treated in extracts from several writers. Each of these three pamphlets will be, as it were, a handful of short liberal tracts on its special subject.

The other thirteen numbers will probably be single sermons from as many preachers,—preachers ranging in their thought from Liberal Orthodoxy to the Society for Ethical Culture; most of them finding a home, therefore, under the Unitarian name. To announce the broad religious fellowship, the "unity without uniformity" of faith, implied in such pulpit comradeship,—to announce and emphasize and further that, is one purpose for which the CHURCH-DOOR PULPIT as well as UNITY was started; it is one purpose which itself started "Unitarianism." The independence of each writer is guarded by the note printed on his sermon, that he is responsible for his own alone, and for nothing else in the series. So far as those invited have been heard from and decided on, the list, alphabetically arranged, stands now:

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| **Felix Adler,** | **Rowland Connor,** | **Andrew P. Peabody,** |
| **C. A. Bartol,** | **Washington Gladden,** | **Minot J. Savage,** |
| **Phillips Brooks,** | **T. W. Higginson,** | **John Snyder,** |
| **John W. Chadwick,** | **John C. Learned,** | **S. H. Sonnenschein.** |

The hope is that our churches, West and East, will catch the new church-habit, to *regularly and freely furnish forth a table or shelf near the door with such pamphlets*, first for home reading and then for lending and mailing, *each reader becoming his own missionary society for whatever he finds worthy.* It is found that a minute's "prelude" from the minister, describing the "Church-Door" sermon for the day and its preacher, interests the people in it and him, and usually causes the table to be swept of its thirty, forty or fifty copies. But much of the people's interest depends upon this prelude-habit. To make his dumb colleague do good work the minister must treat him heartily.

Of course some of the sermons will be more liked than others, and be better fitted for mission service. If now and then, among the twenty, one contradicts words spoken at the other end of the church, what then? The note on each pamphlet explains the matter; and, if necessary, the "prelude" can explain it farther. But it should be remembered that these sermons, departing somewhat from our thought, are the very ones which best preach our Gospel of Religious Fellowship, which show we *mean* it.

In this way nearly 30,000 "Church-Door Pulpit" sermons have been distributed more or less widely this past year, mainly in the west. Probably nothing like so many tracts could have been circulated here in any other way. And probably no better way can be devised of making each church, east and west, a little 'Propaganda" society of our Faith and Principles. Everybody knows *one* person who would like to read what *he* likes. Anybody will hand or mail one tract. And this local and post-office Propaganda is much more likely to enlist members and interest the church at large, if the work is allowed to cost them a trifle, than if it costs them nothing. A tract *paid for* is almost redeemed! Paid for by one of its receivers and onspeeders instead of by some Society, it is "twice blessed,—it blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

Each church that subscribes $25 for a block of fifty copies and uses them thoroughly through individual readers, as here suggested, besides any good done in its own homes, sends out twenty times fifty, or one thousand tracts a year, to spread the Liberal Faith—a little mission well worth adding regularly to any church-life.

Will those who think that such a series of twenty pamphlets, as is here described, promises good pocket and post-office preaching, at once send in their subscriptions for the coming year?

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